

Silence

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Silence

by [KoolJack1](#)

Summary

Too traumatized to speak and covered in bruises, Hannibal Lecter is alone. Until another boy comes to the orphanage, not afraid of the boy's intimidating nature and violent tendencies. Will Graham climbs the walls Hannibal surrounded himself with, finding the boy behind them and learning that communicating doesn't need words.

Hannibal Rising AU

Prequel to What We Become

Notes

This is the Prequel to What We Become, the sequel can be found here
<http://archiveofourown.org/works/1015506>

Please see the story tags for trigger warnings as some content may be difficult for readers.

Tyla

The war was hard on everyone, Will felt it from both sides. His mother called his ability to empathize a gift, claiming the ability to feel how others do will allow him to be one of the few good people still left in their world. His father paid no attention to it, there was simply no time to deal with an over emotional son while there were fighter planes soaring over head.

Unlike most children, he wasn't sure his parents were dead. They were merely separated from one another, last he saw them they were alive. Taken by the enemy, but very much alive. He was left to his own devices at the young age of fourteen, only to find he couldn't handle it himself. He didn't have to for long, he was saved by men all in white; taken into their tank and given warmth and food.

They had left him at the orphanage with the promise that if his parents turned up, they'd be directed here to find him. There were a lot of boys here, children of all ages. He recognized the castle that housed them as Lecter castle. He remembered asking his father about who lived beyond the great walls. The Lecter's of course, he'd told him with no ill tone. His father always seemed to hate people of wealth, but he didn't speak ill of the Lecters. They keep to themselves mostly, they help out with money and resources when needed; his father had even said he'd met them briefly.

Will wondered where the Lecters were now, hoping that they'd willingly opened their estate to the orphaned children.

The ache in his chest told him that wasn't the case.

Will didn't fit in, he didn't fit in anywhere. His anxiety at being forced to fit in with all these kids had his heartrate up and his head light. He observed the boys around him, staying on the skirts of their awareness until he could get a feel for everyone.

He made no real friends his first few days, instead he talked very little and did exactly what was asked of him. He noticed everything. He noticed how they had assigned beds and places to eat, even that the place to his right had a gap between himself and the next boy that no one even glanced at. That's how he noticed that on the third day, the space next to him now had a plate set in front of it. He'd just learned their chants, mouthing it along; and just as it ended the room fell to an uneasy silence. The door to the dining hall swung opened. Will jumped at the sound, turning to watch as another boy he hadn't seen before stumbled in. He was slightly taller than Will, his hair a dark blonde mess on his head. His eyes were dark and wide with terror, his skinny body hunched slightly over itself as he walked right to the place next to Will.

Will swallowed roughly at the emotions that came off of him in waves, unable to keep his eyes from wandering over the darkened bruise on the boys left cheekbone. The boy didn't turn his head to so much as glance at him, but his body swayed as if standing straight took great effort. Will kept his eyes turned to him even after he turned his head, watching as everyone around them sat down, Will following along while the other boy stood stone still

next to him. Everyone began eating in silence. Will listened to the boys breathing next to him, quiet huffs of air while he resisted the urge to reach out to touch his hand and ease him into his seat.

His breathing sped up as the watchers approached the standing boy from behind. Will looked at the hand dangling by him to watch it tremble and grasp into a weak fist. He held his breath at the onslaught of emotions and tension. A sudden crack of a baton hit the boy in the back of the knee and he opened his mouth in a silent cry and fell down into the seat next to Will panting for air.

He sat just like that while the rest of them ate and slowly started speaking to each other. Will's stomach flipped and he set his utensils down and turned his head to the boy, unable to ignore his presence as the others did. "Breathe slower," he said quietly after he continued to nearly gasp for air next to him.

"His names Hannibal, he don't talk," the younger boy across the table supplied, "We think something's wrong with him, he's crazy." If the words affected him, Hannibal made no indication that he'd even heard them. Will frowned at the younger boy then back at Hannibal. "He can be nice sometimes, when we get cake he gives me his piece if I ask. He doesn't like people talking to him or touching him though."

Will looked back down at his plate of food, staying as still as Hannibal. He let the overwhelming mess of emotions and unsteady breathes lull him and he waited for the signal that they could rise from the table.

Stille

They sit still and quiet for roughly an hour while the others eat and talk as if the incident never happened. The younger boy across the table picks through his food, glancing up at Hannibal every once in awhile. Hannibal sits so still next to Will, even Will is afraid to move for fear of startling him.

The younger boy across the table takes his piece of bread and holds it out to Hannibal, "You can have it for your birds." Hannibal's eyes don't wander from the plate in front of him. The little boy places it on his plate and eats a bit of what's on his plate until a bell rings and everyone files out of the room.

Hannibal is still until everyone except Will is gone, and Will wonders what storms rage inside the strange boy's mind. Will can feel the terrible confusion and frustration crushing his soul in his chest.

With grace and fluidity Will didn't expect, Hannibal snatches the two chunks of bread off his plate and stands before Will can even blink and turns to head from the dining hall. Will grabs his bread and the piece from the now vacant plate to his left and follows Hannibal out of the room and down the hall. Hannibal makes a left instead of the right where Will knows the rest of the boys went. He doesn't stop, instead heads right out the exit and into the dim late afternoon. Will hesitates, unsure if they are allowed to wander beyond the walls. Will wonders a lot of things; if Hannibal even knows he is following, if he wants company. Inhaling deeply, he goes out the door; the slight chill in the air makes him shiver slightly as he heads towards the bushes ahead. Hannibal is just on the other side, Will nearly walks into him.

The boy stares at him as if he was expecting him to come through the bushes, waiting. His vulnerable expression and terrified eyes are gone, replaced by piercing eyes and flat lined lips. Will takes a step back, his heart lurching as he clears his throat. "Birds, I have more bread for your birds." He stutters, extending his hand with the bread. Hannibal's eyes hardly glance down at the bread before searching Will's eyes for something unknown. "My name is Will, you're Hannibal I know. The other boy said bread for birds, and where birds swim there are usually fish. I used to like to fish with my dad before.. All this." He stammers out lamely, breaking eye contact uncomfortably.

Will swallows thickly, prepared to just turn and walk away when Hannibal finally moves, taking a step back and then slowly turning to continue walking. Will follows closely behind, nearly tripping over his own two feet. It's a quiet walk the rest of the distance to a small pond where two black swans swim near the edge as if knowing they will be getting a snack soon. Hannibal tears some bread and tosses it to the birds. Will mirrors the action, feeling a slight calmness come over himself, and Hannibal inhales deeply.

Will allows himself to feel, his mind wandering. He feels the chill and listens to the first early crickets and the sounds of Hannibal's even breathing and the tiny ripples of the water rolling onto the shore. The deep set sadness and loneliness recedes, and he can feel his new

companions deep set troubles and overwhelming... Emptiness. He can feel the pit that consumes the boy's chest and numbness that extends to his fingers. When Will's eyes flutter open again, he sees Hannibal is looking directly at him. "You lived in this house, your name is Hannibal Lecter." It's a statement, not a question; and he knows. He feels and he sees and he *understands* where the deep rooted pain stems from.

A flash of.. Something darkens Hannibal's face for a split second before he turns back to look at the birds. Will feels a new form of sadness consume his heart and he licks his lips and offers the other piece of bread to Hannibal when he sees he's run out of bread himself.

Lecter stares at his hand before slowly reaching to take it, taking great care not to let his fingers touch Will's skin at all.

They stand there until its nearly dark before Hannibal turns and starts to walk back towards the orphanage. Will follows again, this time walking right next to Hannibal. The other boy keeps his hands buried in the pockets of his uniform, Will mirrors that too. It's a comfortable silence, almost like Hannibal is choosing silence over speech. Will wonders if he is choosing it, and he wonders why.

Hannibal holds the door for him, "Thank you," Will whispers, afraid that too much noise will ruin the moment, ruin the new friendship Will feels developing in the silence between them.

The hall is clear, and Hannibal leads the way back the way they came; until they both hear voices. Lecter freezes, halting Will. Hannibal flinches when the door opens, turning to shove Will back down the hall towards where Will remembers the other boys are getting ready for bed.

"Hannibal Lecter," a heavily accented voice calls, "No matter what we do to you as punishment, you insist on breaking every rule. We called everyone for bed nearly an hour ago." He feels a rush of emotions that aren't his own and his stomach twists at the realization that Hannibal pushed him away to save him.

The sound of breathing fills the hallway, and Will now recognizes the gasping breaths as Hannibal's echoing off the walls. "Come with us, the dean would like to see you."

Will turns and hurries down the hall and towards the room before he has to hear more.

МОЛЧАНИЕ

Chapter Notes

Translation for the Lithuanian in this chapter to English can be found at the end in the order it appears in the dialog, thanks to Google Translate.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will is nearly swallowing tears as he strips his uniform and puts on the exact pajamas as the others. They're left folded on each of their cots, washed daily. He takes account for people to beds, finding the one with the matching pajamas still folded neatly on the edge of a cot a few down from his own.

Hannibal's cot.

Will cringes at the matching emptiness he feels in his chest. He feels just as empty as the cot, and when he pulls back the covers and slides into the flat cot of his own, he feels his heart tug painfully in his chest as he wonders where Hannibal is.

He nearly asks someone, turning to glance at the boy who settles into the cot next to him. *Where do they take the bad ones? What happens to them?* The words die in his throat when Hannibal comes through the door, hardly glancing at Will as he goes to his own cot. Will's eyes don't leave him as he steps to have his back against the wall and manages to change his shirt without ever actually being shirtless.

The room is submerged in darkness and silence after everyone is settled, which Will hadn't minded the previous nights. Now the urge to go be by Hannibal has taken him over, he wants to know where he was the first few days he was here, where they take him, and why. He wants to be.. Something. He hears a few quiet gasps and flinches at the realization that a bunch of teenage boys are trapped together all the time, and they have urges to tend to.

He ignores it, instead closing his eyes and focusing on a time long before the war. Fishing in the lake by their small home with his father, the dog they'd found roaming about barking at the flipping fish they reeled in. Mother cooking the fish for them while he followed his father around; desperate for even a drop of approval.

He must have dozed off, because he woke up wet with sweat and the memory of watching his parents dragged away by covered faces. When he opened his eyes, disoriented; the first thing he's aware of is desperate cries.

He opens his eyes, listening closer to the sounds breaking the silence. "Mischa, no," the murmurs carry around the room, followed by a loud cry that rips Will the rest of the way from sleep.

Another panicked cry rips from someone's throat, and when he sits up; he sees who it's coming from. Hannibal is tangled in his bedding, his face contorted in panic stricken fear. "Mischa," he whimpers, and the door opens; flooding the room in light. Will can't look away as one of the watchers comes right to Hannibal's bed and bangs their baton on the metal post.

"Pabusti," the boy yells, hitting the bed frame hard enough that Hannibal's sleeping form jerks away subconsciously. Will flinches when Hannibal finally wakes up with a gasp, his eyes bursting open as he sits up and struggles to get away from the taller boy standing over his bed. "Atsistoti, bjaurus!" Everyone is awake now, but no one looks. Will realizes sickeningly that this is a normal occurrence here. Hannibal Lecter suffers greatly every day, and not one person here does a thing about it. Will imagines the nightmares coiled behind the fearful eyes as he watches Hannibal nearly fall from his cot and stand on trembling legs. He's soaked in sweat, panting for air as his eyes fall to the floor. "Ugh, jums šlapias lova, bjaurus! Ateik tentui plovimo kiaulių!" Hannibal stands still, either unwilling or unable to move. The watcher grabs his arm tightly and rips the soiled bedding from the cot and drags them both from the room before slamming the door. Will's chest tightens with sadness again, and he blinks at the cots around him as someone across the way sits up.

Will recognizes him as the younger boy from the dining hall. "He has nightmares and wets the bed almost every night," he whispers to Will sadly, "it's the only time he speaks. It's how we know he can talk, he cries for his family."

Will's throat is too tight to ask why he cries for his family, and he knows. Will knows why he cries for his family. Hannibal Lecter's family was dead, and he is now forced to live in his own home. Now they abuse him, the bruise on his face was from a beating. They could be beating him right now while the rest of them lay in their beds. "They don't like that he cries all night, they take him outside and put him in the punishment room so he can cry all he wants." Will looks around before slowly sliding out of the cot and walking to crouch near the boy's bed.

"What's your name?"

"Samuel, you are Will yes?"

Will nods, "Hannibal is your friend? I can tell."

The little boy smiles slightly, "Everyone thinks he's crazy because he don't talk or eat and he cries and he hits people a lot but he always gives me his cake and one time Roberto tried to take my piece and Hannibal hit him and got it back. He is never mean to me."

"Where is this room? Can I go there?"

Samuel's face darkens, "If they find you near there especially late they will lock you in there too."

"Do they watch?"

"Not the whole time. You must go outside and it's like a cage around the corner. Do not let them see you."

Will smiles and pats the boy's head, "I won't, I just want to see he's alright."

He sneaks out of the room and into the dim hallway, wandering back towards the dining hall and then the doors Hannibal led him out earlier. He doesn't hear anyone coming, and he quietly closes the door behind him. It's much darker now, and much colder. He shivers, wishing he had thought to wear shoes. He finds the cage just beyond a turn in the wall. Hannibal is huddled under a thin blanket in the far corner. His eyes are wide and unseeing as Will stumbles over to the cage. "Hannibal..."

Lecter doesn't budge, but his nostrils flair as he inhales shakily. "I just came to see that you were okay." He turns then, his eyes watching Will. He tilts his head and frowns, eyebrows pulling together. Will shivers and Hannibal frowns deeper, Will notices he's in fresh pajamas.

The look Hannibal gives him tells Will he wants him to go back inside, and Will frowns back, "I feel bad leaving you," he admits quietly, reaching out to touch a shaking hand to the bar separating them. Lecter tips his head the other way and eyes him curiously before turning and looking back out in the direction of the pond. Will stifles a yawn, opening his eyes to see the tiniest of smiles gracing the thin lips. "It's too cold out here for you."

As if to respond, Hannibal buries himself deeper in the blanket and sighs, refusing to look back at Will again. He stands there just a moment longer before taking a step back and swallowing hard, turning finally and heading inside without looking back again. Still the hallways are clear, and he makes it back to his cot again unseen. Samuel is fast asleep again, and Will vows to be the friend Hannibal hasn't had here.

He doesn't want to admit he needs the companionship just as much.

Chapter End Notes

Lithuanian to English

Pabusti: Wake Up.

Atsistoti, bjaurus: Stand Up, ugly.

Jums šlapias lova, bjaurus: You wet the bed, disgusting.

Ateik tentui plovimo kiaulį: Come wash the sheets pig.

Silencio

My voice was lost so long ago.

I don't need it to speak, people hear me loud and clear. People hear but they don't listen. People understand me just fine; after all, body language is more telling than verbal language.

I can feel my voice in my chest, humming quietly at the back of my throat.

It threatens to emerge often, sometimes I wish it would. Often when fingers travel to places I don't want them, hands that are too heavy against my skin. My body refuses to numb to touches, but it insists on telling everyone to stay away.

I shake without control, I can only manage noises that don't sound like my own; it's therapy, you see. Seeking fingers and rough hands, wandering about and mapping my body- bruises and all.

The voices always tell me to lay still and just feel- it feels good if I just feel. I whine like a pained animal and twitch under their touches- they don't listen to my body language either.

Don't touch me, stay away. Stay away.

Will doesn't stay away. Will doesn't try to force noises and reactions from me. Will is calmness, my hands don't tremble so desperately when he's around. I think he understands.

沉默

Chapter Notes

The translation of the Lithuanian in this chapter to English can be found in the end notes, thanks to google translate.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will is unable to close his eyes for the rest of the night. Every time his eyelids shut, he imagines Hannibal's painful cries and trembling form, and he *feels* it, over and over again. He can nearly hear Hannibal's heart pounding as darkness consumes his soul and his mind twists and turns into devils and nightmares that he can't escape.

Will's heart flutters uncomfortably in his chest until the darkness outside brightens slightly and the watchers come to collect them all for their morning exercise.

They dress in a hurry, before anyone can yell at their slowed pace and head for the courtyard. Will's eyes scan for any sign of Hannibal, just a glimpse that he's free from the cage and alright. He gets no such comfort, following the jumpingjacks and push-up routine as the cold bites into his skin.

It's nearly bright by the time they finish jogging, the cold is no longer an issue. He's already adjusting to never having privacy, following silently when his group of boys is led to the washing area.

That's where he sees Hannibal again, he's huddled near the door, and as soon as Will lays eyes on him, the air is too thick. The rush of anxiety hits Will hard enough to take his breath away.

No one spares Lecter a glance, the other few boys stripping and stepping into the stalls. Will doesn't breathe, his eyes focused on the dark bruise and split lip on Hannibal's face. He nearly wants to reach out and touch his face, to offer just a second of comfort; just a gentle touch. Instead he finally looks away, shaking as he follows the others under the trickle of water. The watchers don't waste time, and Will can't look up at their faces while they yell for them to make it fast.

Hannibal doesn't move from his spot, until they forcibly take hold of his arm just as the night before. Lecter's mouth opens, Will can almost hear the silent words leaving his lips as the watcher who pulled him from his nightmare earlier this same day all but rips his flimsy clothing from his body.

And that's when Will sees.

Sees the dark colored bruises on his belly and hips just before Hannibal wraps his arms around his middle. The others don't even glance, they simply finish and towel off and head for the fresh uniforms they've been left.

Will can't wrap his mind around what's happening in this place, this so called sanctuary for the orphaned children of the war. He'd rather be out in the cold.

Hannibal hunches under the water, shaking at the cold rush with his back to Will. Dark bruises shadow his forearms from being pushed and pulled, and Will imagines all the boys here who thought to misbehave only needed one punishment to learn their lesson.

With every lesson they teach Hannibal, he gets shoved further and further away. "Hannibal," he whispers quietly, getting no response other than a stiffening of the others back.

One of the watchers - he'd have to learn their names- returns and pulls him out of the water, "As if we have enough water for you to stand here. I must fetch the water myself for your washing. Out!"

Will dresses, his stomach uneasy. No one comes out of here okay, even if they ever find their families again. No one is ever the same. They are shells of themselves, living day to day too afraid to do anything other than exactly as instructed. Brainwashed.

Hannibal stumbles out right after him, hardly catching his balance before shoving his arms into a fresh shirt. He's covered up before Will can even get the shirt on the rest of the way. "Will you feed the birds today?"

Lecter doesn't look up at his question- doesn't even act as if Will is standing right there. Hannibal is gone just as Will finishes dressing, and he hurries to keep up.

Routine means that next comes breakfast; Hannibal stands right where he did the previous night. Will joins him, mouthing the chants when the time comes. "Sing, Lecter!" One of the boys yells, shoving at Hannibal's shoulder.

Will can feel he's receded into himself, his mind is not where his body is. Will hopes its in a safe place while they all sit down to eat, and he can't say he's not relieved when Hannibal sits without being forced.

Will decides to eat today, smiling slightly at Samuel across the table. "You should eat," Will whispers to Hannibal, who stares down at his plate with unseeing eyes.

Will's surprised when Hannibal's eyes flicker to his briefly before he reaches for his fork and takes a slow deliberate bite. Will moves slowly, afraid to scare Hannibal back into stillness. He manages seven more bites before he puts the fork down and reverts back to stillness.

It's not nearly enough, but Will smiles encouragingly; deciding it's a breakthrough. "Last time he ate he threw up all over Charles," Samuel giggles quietly, "He's the meanest watcher."

Will didn't want to know what happened after that incident, even if the image of it happening was appealing. A small win that he can only imagine was followed by a bigger loss.

Hannibal doesn't throw up this time though, instead he sneaks bread from his plate when they all stand and makes the left instead of the right and heads back outside into the morning sunlight.

"We study and read for a bit now, you haven't come to the library with us yet. You're too new." Samuel informs him while Will watches Hannibal disappear outside.

"He reads by the pond, with the swans."

"Did you know Hannibal, before?" Will questions the younger boy.

"I saw him with my father in town, he was with his mother and little sister. I was four, I remember because he gave me something he drew. A picture."

Will smiles slightly at the thought, "Must we stay in the library?"

"No, you may take your studies and books anywhere on the grounds."

Will takes that as all he needs to know before he follows Hannibal out the door and back the way he remembered last time. He's in the same spot, sitting at the water tossing the swan that lingers pieces of bread.

"Hello, Hannibal." Just to make him aware he's there before he comes to sit beside him.

Lecter of course doesn't reply, but he does offer Will half of his bread.

The gesture makes Will's stomach flutter and he takes it with the same care not to touch him as Hannibal expressed. Inhaling shakily, Will rubs his eyes, "I look at you, and I see. I feel how bad you feel." Will says honestly, peeking at Hannibal from the corner of his eyes. Hannibal blinks slowly, his eyes following the bird as he circles the pond. "You don't have to hide it from me, those bruises. I have them too, but you can't see them."

Hannibal turns to face him then, his eyes narrow and searching. Will meets his gaze calmly, the first time he's allowed steady eye contact in so long. "I haven't been here long enough to know, but I do understand."

Hannibal is the one who breaks the eye contact after nearly a minute more of searching, and he slowly turns to look back at the birds. Will reads the gesture as acceptance, and he smiles slightly to himself and tosses another piece of bread to the hungry animals.

It's peaceful, Will nearly loses track of time until they're startled out of their calmness by a disturbance in the water. The birds whine, and at the second plop in the water, Will realizes it's a rock.

Confused, he looks over as Hannibal stands, coiled and tense. Will stands too, following Hannibal's gaze to the bushes ahead. Another rock lands by their feet and Hannibal makes a low noise in his chest as two boys Will hasn't seen before emerges from the bushes to their left.

Hannibal's fists tighten as they throw another, and it hits Will in the shoulder. "The freak has a friend, bendras!"

"Maybe it's his boyfriend."

They laugh, and Will feels frozen in time when Hannibal lurches forward and lunges at the bigger of the two. He sounds like a rabid animal, the way he growls and claws at the boy. They fall to the dirt, the laughter ending abruptly and is replaced by yelling.

Lost in blind rage, Hannibal ignores the cries and bites, his hands coming up to wrap around the boys throat.

The shock wears off and Will hurries closer, fear clenching his heart as he doesn't hesitate to wrap his arms around Hannibal's chest from behind.

Lecter cries out as if he was burned, his grip going slack on the boys throat and coming up to clutch at Will's arm as he drags Hannibal back and pushes him against the dirt. Will crushes Hannibal with all his weight as he struggles frantically under him, noises erupt from Hannibal's throat that are anything but human.

"Easy, Hannibal," he whispers, bringing his mouth down by Hannibal's ear. "I don't want to hurt you, calm down. You don't have to protect me."

Before he's successful, Will is yanked from his place holding Hannibal down and pulled into the standing position. "Not another one," an older man growls in his ear as he yanks him away. Another man grabs Hannibal as he tries to scramble away in a panic.

"He didn't do it, I did." Will struggles to say.

No one listens or cares, and Will stops talking and struggles to watch as Hannibal is dragged away first, then him while someone else checks on the boy Hannibal attacked.

Heart beating frantically, Will is pushed into the punishment room; he clings to the bars as Hannibal is dragged inside.

He isn't moving.

Chapter End Notes

Bendras: Gross

σιωπή

Chapter Notes

English translations for the Lithuanian in this chapter can be found in the end notes, thanks to Google Translate.

This chapter will include mentions of rape and trauma, and self harm. Please revisit the story tags for warnings.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*Fingers, fingers are stronger and more persistent than they look.
Mine clutch at things involuntarily, and they tremble with weakness.
I try to swallow but my throat always feels tight- always feels paralyzed when hands push me face down.
I want to fight- fighting makes it hurt worse.
Hands travel, they roam around and touch and squeeze and wander down between my belly and the bed and grip the front of my pants. I'm enjoying it, I'm always enjoying it they whisper.
Would Will think I'm enjoying it?
I don't know why, but I shut my eyes. I never shut my eyes, but I do and Will is there behind my eyelids. The desperate ache at the base of my spine fades and I whimper when Will raises his hand and brushes his fingers against the bruises on my belly and there is no pain. Just warmth. Warmth and it feels so good.*

Hannibal cries and cries and cries, cries until his throat is raw and bloody while hands drag him to his beloved pond. The swans consider they're lack of meal while the familiar face thrashes in the water helplessly- helpless against the bigger hands that force his face under the water and hold it there.

Will stares from the shore, his feet rooted in place. Charles the watcher looks up just as Hannibal's frantic thrashing turns into final desperate twitches. "It is for his own good, do you know what he will become? Pabasia."

They drag him out of the water after the twitching stops and drop him right at Will's feet. His lifeless body collapses into the dirt with a thud, and Will stares down at it numbly.

He manages to crouch, the urge to finally touch Lecter too strong to miss. He's gentle when he finally reaches a hand to touch the pale, wet skin of his face.

A hand shoots up and grabs his before he can touch the skin, Hannibal's eyes opening to reveal blood red eyes. "Save me, Will."

He shoots up in bed, a scream lodged in his throat. He considers himself lucky that he didn't alert the watchers during his nightmare, he didn't want to be dragged out like Hannibal always was.

Hannibal.

It had been two days since the incident near the pond- no one had seen Lecter since. Not knowing had Will's nightmares at an all time high, leaving him sweating and tired constantly. He checked constantly for any sign of his friend, not finding any relief from the worry as he went about his day.

Samuel had told him the day after the incident that Hannibal had many altercations, most resulting in his disappearance for the following days. Will asked how he was after he returned, and Samuel frowned at him from across the table. "He can hardly stand up, he just stays still and shakes. I try to make him follow me so he doesn't get in more trouble, but I'm afraid he will hurt me."

"What happens to him when he fights?" Will feels breathless, his mind imagining images of the description.

"They have to break it up, but Hannibal does not like being touched and he tries to make them let go. I don't think he wishes to make it harder, I think he is just afraid. Last time after he came back, he stole a blade from the kitchen and Charles found him slicing himself in the wash room. I don't know why, or what happens when he's away. If he spoke he could tell me."

Will feels lightheaded, and he impulsively scans the room again for his friend. Air feels trapped in his chest and he tries to swallow to keep down his lunch. Samuel doesn't offer any more insight and Will leaves the younger boy alone. It's not even ten minutes later when Hannibal comes through the door, Will grips the table to keep himself from standing and meeting him half way. His temple is bandaged, his eyes dart around the room restlessly as he comes to Will's side and sways; hardly able to keep his balance.

He stands there for barely a minute before Charles approaches, his hand striking out to collide with Hannibal's face unexpectedly. Lecter hardly flinches, his eyes remaining focused on his plate. "That's for what you did to Roberto by the pond," his hand raises again and Will just can't stay quiet.

"Stop hitting him," it comes out without his permission and he's standing. His body trembles with energy when Charles freezes, his narrow eyes turning onto Will.

"I advise staying quiet, don't try to save your boyfriend," his hand comes up again, and Will flinches back from a hit that never comes. Hannibal stands with speed Will has never seen, his hand tightly gripping Charles' suspended wrist. In his other hand, Hannibal clutches a fork tightly; his cold eyes level with Charles and the two of them stare at each other before the older boy's eyes flicker down to the fork. It's the clearest message Will has ever seen Hannibal send, it's clearer than any words he's ever heard spoken.

The threat looms in the silence, and Charles steps back, Hannibal holds his arm just a moment longer before letting go and dropping the fork back on the table. Charles swallows thickly and takes a few more steps back before turning around. "Lunch is over early, kiekvienas iš!"

Will isn't sure what is said, but everyone stands and hurries out of the room in a crowd. Hannibal decides to take a few mouthfuls of food before snatching the bread and standing. He doesn't hurry away, instead he stays directly by Will's side until the other boy stands. Will knows to head for the pond, and Lecter walks with him the whole way.

"I'm afraid for you, Hannibal," he admits quietly as they sit in the dirt. Hannibal seems calmed, his eyes shining slightly when his birds come closer.

"I was born in the states, did you know? I don't remember why my father said we had to come here- but we never left. I didn't want to upset him, so I never asked. But now I think we came here so you and I would meet." The words nearly tumble out of his mouth, and Will flinches at how they sound. Hannibal's eyebrows go up, it's first genuine expression he'd ever seen Hannibal make. And then his eyes turn to regard Will curiously. They're the eyes of Hannibal Lecter, the boy that's hidden behind the cold detachment and numbness.

"I've been assuming you spoke English well enough to understand me," he babbles nervously, back peddling. "I speak some Lithuanian though, my father taught me some. He told me to make some friends and then I'd learn it quicker, but I was never good at making friends."

He blushes hotly, breaking the eye contact to observe the birds waiting for more bread. Time stops when Hannibal carefully reaches out and touches his cheek, turning his face back to look at him again. Wide eyed, Will doesn't resist, too stunned and pleased by the unexpected contact to risk frightening Hannibal.

The hand brushes down his cheek to his neck and shoulders, and Will openly stares in fascination at the look of pure... Something on Hannibal's face. Will moves slowly, reaching his own hand up to mirror the action. Hannibal flinches impulsively, the air rushing out of his mouth in a huff before he forces himself still. Eyes scrunched up, Hannibal allows Will's curious fingers to follow the same path his own had; his eyes fluttering open when Will's hand hesitates.

Hannibal's hand is frozen on Will's shoulder, his other grips at his own hip tightly- nearly in a vice. At a loss, Will clears his throat. "Do you want me to...to touch?"

He attentively watches and listens for any sign of a response, and he gets one when Hannibal shifts slightly and removes his shaking hand. Lecter's breaths start coming and going in a rush while his fingers work to unbutton his shirt. His hands shake so badly he fumbles, and Will waits patiently, swallowing roughly at the raw desperation that radiates off of Hannibal. Desperation to be understood and looked at and accepted. Will prepares himself, trying to make his own breathing remain leveled while Hannibal is nearly gasping for air when he finally gets the shirt unbuttoned and separates the front and slips it off his arms all in one movement.

Will let's his eyes wander over the abused skin, blinking back tears of overwhelming emotion as they're feelings mingle. His eyes fall onto the discoloration on Hannibal's hips, half of which disappear under the waist of his pants. Hannibal's fingers push into a darker bruise on his ribs and Will's eyes flicker to his face then back to his clutching hand, "The pain of doing that grounds you," he doesn't hesitate to reach forward and touch a featherlight finger to one of the bruises on his hip. Lecter's entire body is nearly vibrating with energy under Will's gaze as he waits.

The final piece clicks together when he realizes they are hand shaped marks- finger marks. Holding his hips still.

Seeking fingers pressed inside him and he whines and struggles just to breathe.

Hands coming at him from all angles when he fights out of blind panic to get away, restraining him with too much pressure and too much force. Too many hits. He's just afraid, he stutters and babbles noises in an attempt to speak out of his tight throat. Words, he tries to force words out and he will beg if they want to just please stop touching him and holding him still because he can't breathe and his skin is on fire.

He imagines digging their eyes from their skulls and ripping their hands from their bodies and watching the life leave them; he imagines hurting them.

Mischa.

"I see you, Hannibal. I understand what they do," and the words cause the dam to break. Hannibal makes a quiet whine and lurches forward to crush their lips together roughly. Will gasps in pain as their teeth clash and Hannibal's hands clutch his face to hold them together.

It's messy and violent; needy and full of despair and understanding and shame.

Will doesn't resist the assault on his mouth, moving his lips as he tries to keep up with the brutal pace.

It's over far too quickly. When Hannibal pulls back, he smiles a small, haunted smile at him that Will returns. Will returns it because he feels the smile inside him.

Will's fingers feel like I imagined- warm and gentle, they bring no unwanted pain. They bring gentle pain, and his eyes don't judge or pity. Things swell inside me and life bursts out and he understands, and I feel him understanding me.

I taste him because I have to know, I have to consume his flavor and memorize it.

I want to catalog him and revisit him because nothing is wrong when Will is around. Will cares and Will understands.

I'm full and empty at the same time.

Pabasia: Monster
kiekvienas iš: Everyone out.

Silenzio

Chapter Summary

Please read the tags for trigger warnings, this chapter contains many elements described in the tags.

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the Kudos and comments thus far, you're all great. I'm enjoying writing this (as much as one can given the subject matter) but it's a topic in Hannibal's life I always found interesting and wanted to write about

I hope to have this story at over 100 kudos when it's over, it's a goal!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Things change rapidly after that. Hannibal refuses to leave Will's side, and Will doesn't complain. Lecter's quiet company is welcomed over being left alone. Word travels quickly about Hannibal's warning with the fork, and even Charles decides to leave them be. Will feels nearly invincible, the way they become exempt from the rules. Hannibal is quiet peace at Will's side, he takes comfort in knowing that Hannibal is on his side; looking out for him and teaching him about this new world. Teaching him about himself.

Will learns a lot as the days tick by. Hannibal actually has a personality, buried deep inside of him. A strong one, in fact he expresses it without words. Will observes him closely, watching the way his eyes skim pages of books and observe the birds. Watching the way he observes Will himself, the tiniest of smiles on his lips. It doesn't take much, Will realizes, to provoke a reaction from the boy buried just beneath the surface, at least it doesn't take much work for him.

He even crossed their boundaries, giving in to the undeniable urge for connection and contact. Will can feel it radiate from Hannibal, the need to be touched and to feel. Will never pushes for it, but he nearly cries with relief when Hannibal closes the gap between them and kisses him roughly. Hannibal seems fascinated by their exchanges, his eyes alive when his hands wander Will's chest. It's always unexpected, but Will knows that Hannibal plans the actions, considers it carefully before pressing his lips to Will's forcefully.

Will wants to return the touches- he wants to take things a step further, but the value on Hannibal's new found life is higher to him. He's terrified he will ruin it; ruin Hannibal's new found urge to connect with him.

They are only forced apart on certain days, days that leave Will nearly catatonic with worry. Hannibal picks at his food most days now, eating just enough to not be hungry. He's distracted when they eat, his eyes constantly flashing towards the door, waiting. Will doesn't understand until nearly five straight days of Hannibal not getting into trouble. Charles enters and Will watches Hannibal's fork slip from his fingers and his body tense. "The dean wants to see you, Lecter."

Naïve as ever, Will wonders if it's to check up on him after so many days of not hearing a peep from him. It makes Will proud that he'd helped this boy out of his shell. Hannibal's eyes flash to Will's uncertainly, a heavy emotion hiding behind his eyes when he stands shakily. Will instantly feels empty when he's out of the room and out of his sight.

That happens multiple times over the course of the following weeks, each time Hannibal finds Will near the pond waiting for him. Will doesn't understand why Hannibal always drops to his knees next to Will and buries his face into his neck shakily. He clings to Will and whimpers into his skin, his body melting into Will's bonelessly. It makes Will shiver, the way he practically tries to climb into Will's skin. He breathes quickly and shallowly, his heart thudding against his ribs hard enough that Will can feel it through his shirt. He never says anything, he never asks why; he doesn't think he could handle the answer so he turns a blind eye while his friend brings himself back from the ledge of panic.

It takes awhile for him to calm down, Will lets him cling to his shirt and inhale against his skin until the tension leaves his body and he slumps against Will before slowly sitting back, his eyes looking anywhere but at Will's face.

Other days, Hannibal is almost shockingly normal. Samuel doesn't ask for his cake anymore, whispering to Will one day that Hannibal never tried eating it until Will came around and now that he does he wants him to have it. On some days, Hannibal puts his feet in their little pond or ventures beyond it to explore a bit further. One day he even shoves Will against a tree and kisses him breathless before smiling slightly and backing off. Will huffed a laugh at him and tried to calm his heartbeat, elated with the realization that Hannibal was teasing him. It's exhilarating, not knowing what to expect next.

They grow so close that Hannibal's constant silence no longer seems strange. Will doesn't mind talking for once, and Hannibal certainly doesn't mind listening. Will tells him the good and the bad of his life, his fears, how he wonders if his parents are still alive and if they're even looking for him. His dad probably wouldn't even bother, he admits one day. Hannibal frowns at that, staring at the ground in front of him and Will tries to imagine what words Hannibal would use in response to the things he says.

One day Hannibal selects a book from the library for him, leading the way back to their pond before sitting and handing the book to Will. His eyebrows pull together, "It's not in English."

Hannibal doesn't look at him, instead regards the swans. Will sighs and opens to the first page, shakily reading the foreign words out loud. He realizes he knows a lot of them- its basic language. Next he realizes it's a children's book, and his lips twitch up and he reads the rest. Hannibal is smiling slightly to himself when Will glances up at him, it encourages him to read all the way to the end. When he flips to the last page, his words die in his throat as he studies the inside of the back cover, understanding now why Hannibal would select this book.

Two handprints are traced there; one is small, labeled Mischa. The other is slightly bigger, and labeled Hannibal. Will's throat tightens and he can't look away from the page as Hannibal raises a finger to trace the outline of his sister's handprint, then twists his wrist to place his hand in the bigger one.

His hand no longer fits in the outline, his fingers are longer, the palm wider. It makes Will sad for some reason. Will's fingers tingle when he reaches up to trace the outlines of both hands.

He clears his throat, but when he speaks his voice is still hoarse, "Mischa was your sister." He never asks things as a question, he states things merely so Hannibal knows what he's thinking. Questions are pointless when the person being asked has no interest in answering; Will just trusts Hannibal will inform him if an assumption is incorrect.

He sees the little girl giggling as her older brother carefully holds her hand still while he traces it, spelling her name out loud for her when he writes it just under.

'Your turn 'Annble!'

He doesn't hesitate to trace his own, spelling the letters of his own name though she doesn't pronounce them all.

'M for Mischa! H for 'Annble!'

'Exactly.' The voice is higher and young, ignorant of pain or suffering. Innocent like a child's.

The happy little girl that loved her brother fades, fades to a cold, hungry winter in a small cabin.

'Stay with your sister, always. She needs you, Hannibal,' his father said to him the day before his death. Hannibal nodded in understanding, vowing to live by his father's words

Chained together and cold, they huddle together for warmth. Hannibal wraps little Mischa in the blanket and pulls her against him, petting her hair as she shivers.

'Don't feel good 'Annble,' she murmurs, coughing against his chest. Hannibal hugs her tighter and buries his face into her hair.

'Just sleep,' he whispers as she coughs again and starts to cry.

'I want mommy,' she whines and he swallows thickly and covers her mouth.

'Please don't cry Mischa, you'll make the men mad.' She sobs louder, clutching him tighter as someone comes up the stairs.

'Shut her up,' the pig hisses, Hannibal hisses back.

'I'm trying, she's only a baby.'

It morphs again, Mischa is quietly laying on his chest while he dozes off. He counts how many times she coughs, listening to her wheezing breaths and wishes his mother would be

able to tell him what to do for her.

Feet pound the stairs again and he's roused and fully aware as someone yanks the blanket off of them. Hannibal growls at them when the men yell and grab Mischa from his chest. She cries and screams, reaching for him as they drag him downstairs. He wills her to calm down as they poke and feel their bodies, his mind going numb when they look at each other and nod when Mischa coughs.

She reaches for him again as she's picked up, and fight brews in him as he's screaming now too. A fighting seven year old is stronger than he looks and it takes nearly three men to hold him still, and nearly ten blows all over his body before adrenaline isn't enough and one final slam onto the floor knocks his head against the wood and he stills.

He's frozen on the floor, tired and achey while Mischa screams and reaches for him. His head throbs, aching behind his eye sockets when all he can do is stare, his ears ringing. They drag her outside and slam the door, her cries muffled by the wind until suddenly she is silent.

He stares at the door, unblinking and numb. They aren't holding him down anymore, but he makes no attempt to move. He just stares at the door as her bloodied, lifeless body is brought back inside.

He crawls away from them then, into the corner. Back against the wall he pulls his knees to his chest, his eyes wide and staring straight ahead.

Images of his unmoving body when they press a spoonful of chunky broth to his lips. A fat man kneeling next to him to drape a blanket over his unresponsive form, attempting to feed him again.

He only manages a few mouthfuls before he's vomiting all over himself.

Will cries out when he breaks free from the images, his heart racing in his chest. Hannibal jumps at the noise, glancing up from the book to look at him. When he meets his eyes, Will imagines a smaller version of him stumbling numbly out into the snow, collapsing and ready for death.

Will senses Hannibal knows what happened, knows what Will was able to see. It's the final secret Hannibal hasn't shared, and the older boy's face twists into sadness followed by a shy look of vulnerability. "It's okay," Will whispers automatically, and Hannibal watches him closely for another moment before looking back down at the book. Will accepts what happened to the rest of the Lecter family, his chest burning with grief from a loss that isn't his.

Will waits while Hannibal studies the page a moment longer, then he looks up to meet Will's eyes. "You used to read this to her." It's Hannibal's way of sharing himself, his way of letting Will into his world. The sentiment is touching, beautiful in a way not many things in life are.

Hannibal responds by kissing Will, more gentle than ever before. Will carefully puts the book down for safe keeping and kisses back while Hannibal's hands roam down his chest. Will can

feel Hannibal restrain the urge to dominate the kiss and turn it violent; resisting the urge to demonstrate the same roughness that he was taught.

"This is nice," Will encourages against the soft lips pressing his open, and he feels the thin line curl up slightly at his words- a rare smile. His hands are gentle and careful, fingers scratching over Will's nipples through his shirt. He groans appreciatively, and Hannibal presses just slightly harder into him in response.

It's awkward in its own way when the uncertain hands land in his lap; though he suspected it was coming, the strange sensation of hands that aren't his own is surprising but not unwelcome. Will tenses when curious fingers brush against his interested arousal under the thin cotton pants, and Hannibal tenses to mirror his body language.

Will inhales deeply and breaks their kiss, keeping his eyes closed and focusing on Hannibal, just Hannibal.

It feels good after some time, though I don't believe it should. The way large hands stroke and rub and press. Warmth pools low in my belly and I swallow moans; I'm afraid to open my eyes and see.

'See how nice it can feel when you just relax, Hannibal? Feel how hard you are, open your eyes and look.'

I don't open my eyes, but I choke when the grip tightens and moves faster.

Will is behind my eyes, it's his hands and the warmth spreads to my whole body and pressure builds almost uncomfortably.

I bite my cheek to stay quiet, squirming at the touches of Will's hand and the pressure builds so much it hurts and a noise forces its way past my lips.

'It's okay,' Will whispers and my body shudders and the pressure releases and it feels so good I wish it never stopped.

Will fades, and my heart starts to ache so bad I think it's breaking and I know I did something terrible.

Shame crushes my lungs and I'm gasping for air and I can't open my eyes and see that it wasn't Will's hand.

Will's eyes burst open with a gasp and he's free from the vision, Hannibal stares at him wide eyed and expressionless. His hands are gone from his body and the space between them is wider than when Will had shut his eyes.

He swallows thickly and clears his throat, "You don't have to be ashamed. If it's easier... Thinking of me, that's okay. It's the dean, the man in charge?" The realization crashes down on him, all those times Will had just sat and continued eating while Hannibal was taken from the room to be touched and prodded. He knew the whole time, but he didn't want to see. He didn't want to see because there was nothing he could do to stop it.

The image of Hannibal finding him by the pond after every time of being taken from a meal and holding onto him like he's drowning floats into his mind, and Will's stomach burns. It was comfort that he was seeking; something to hold onto while he coped with the events. Connection to sooth the ache in his chest.

Hannibal nods, a jerky and uncertain motion; actually moves his head up and down after a long pause. A direct response, a gesture that directly proves he understands and listens. The response seems to confuse Hannibal, his eyebrows pull together. Will smiles soothingly, "Don't be ashamed of anything, you don't have to hide anything from me. I'm sorry I didn't see what was happening when you.. Were taken away."

Lecter sighs, shifting to move closer again so he can press his lips back to Will's. The tension is gone from his limbs, relief washing through his tired body when Will kisses him back with gentle understanding. Relief that his burden is now shared with someone who can comprehend it.

Will gives him what he wants, his hands starting at his chest and stroking down to his ribs and belly; his finger tips pressing just slightly harder in places he knows bruises hide just under the cotton shirt. Hannibal breaths heavy, struggling to keep himself still and calm while Will stokes his stomach and waits for Hannibal to calm down. Torn between wanting, *needing* Will's touch and being disgusted by the contact, being afraid of it.

He feels the exact moment Hannibal wins his internal debate.

Will feels the moan more than he hears it, it vibrates against his lips as Hannibal's tongue presses into his mouth. Will's heart pounds as his hands slip lower, finding the hardened bulge in Lecter's pants surprising and pleasing.

Nerves cause him to fumble when he releases the string holding the pants up and slips them down to free the hardened length from its confines. There's a bruised bite mark just where his thigh meets his belly and Will gently brushes his fingers over it in acceptance, pushing the image of how it got there from his mind before letting his fingers gently touch the hardened length.

Hannibal's moan is audible this time, his mouth releasing Will's to suck at his throat, one of his hands finding its way back down the front of Will's pants.

His mind catches up that they're really doing this, Hannibal is really letting him stroke his dick and kiss him despite what's been done to him. He's trusting him, and Will is trusting Lecter. It's a mutual understanding between the two that out of everyone in the world, all the bad; whatever it is between them is good.

Hannibal is starved for release, starved with the need to feel the gentle tugs on his cock that doesn't flare shame in his chest when it feels good. He bites Will's neck, reminding himself not to sink his teeth in as deeply as others have done to him. It's not supposed to hurt more than pleasure. He's shaking, but Will is too; his hand mirrors what Will's does. Gentle, he reminds; himself Will is gentle and he has to not hurt him. Reminds himself that he doesn't want to hurt him.

Hannibal's face is buried in Will's neck, warm bursts of air against his sweaty skin cause him to shiver. He's hiding his face, and Will won't have it. He wants to see Hannibal's face, watch what he looks like when things don't hurt him but feel only good. He turns his head and nuzzles Hannibal's throat, moving his hand quicker, his thumb brushing the head of his leaking member makes Hannibal twitch and crane his neck up to let Will suck on his skin.

Hannibal's hand follows the lead of what Will's does, and he squeezes the tip gently, testing the reaction. He's rewarded with a sharp bite on his neck, and the heat in his belly swells and he's panting when Will licks his ear. "You can think of this whenever you need to," Will whispers breathlessly, and it's all it takes. Hannibal tenses against him and his breath catches in his throat when he cums, the warm fluid wetting Will's hand.

He swears he hears Hannibal breathe his name so quietly he could be imagining it. The thought pushes Will over the edge and he cums with a moan, panting Hannibal's name directly into his ear. Bonelessly, they lean on each other and inhale the scent of their mingled release and sweat.

Will nearly sobs when Hannibal's hand timidly finds his and holds it tightly.

For the first time ever, the warmth isn't shameful, and Will is real. It feels so good.

Chapter End Notes

I added individual chapter titles, if you can figure out what each of them say and what language they're in.

שתיקה

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Days pass for them easier and easier. Will swears there's a physical change in Hannibal, and Will can feel it within him.

The way he initiates gentle touches, the way his eyes flutter closed when Will experiments with varying pressure of bites and touches.

In reality he knows the change and progress is so subtle that probably no one around them has seen it. They're just two freaks who found each other, and Will is okay with that. Hannibal doesn't seem to notice.

Samuel notices the shift within Hannibal, Will can tell. He doesn't keep so distant anymore, he even draws Hannibal a picture that he presents to him over breakfast.

"Do you remember you drew a picture of a bug, that day I saw you?" Samuel says conversationally, Hannibal's eyes examine the paper that's slid in front of him. "I said it was pretty and you gave it to me, it was a cricket and you told me it meant good luck. So I drew one for you."

Hannibal stares at the childish drawing closely, then he slowly looks back up at Samuel and smiles, a slight twitch of the lips. Elated, the boy grins at the acceptance. Hannibal folds it into his pocket when meal time ends. He surprises Will too when he looks expectingly at Samuel when he stands near the door he takes to get to the pond. "I can come with you?"

Will feels lighter, he feels the lightness of both Hannibal and Samuel when they sit and feed the swans. The younger boys chats away, Hannibal listens and Will speaks conversationally.

Will lost track of how long they were sitting there when Samuel turns to Hannibal, "I have something to tell you." His face as serious as a child's could be.

Lecter glances at him for a brief second before looking away, and Samuel inhales deeply. "My parents contacted the dean, they're alive and they're coming here to take me with them. Probably tomorrow."

Will inhales sharply, unsure of what this will mean to Hannibal. The little boy waits while Hannibal considers, "I drew you the cricket so you'll have good luck. But you have Will to be your friend now, I just wanted to tell you that I'll miss you."

The words hang in the air, and Will watches Hannibal closely. His eyebrows pull together and he swallows roughly and turns to face his younger friend. Will holds his breath when Hannibal stands and starts to walk back towards the orphanage, then he deflates, prepared to explain on Hannibal's behalf.

Will can only watch as Samuel stands too and reaches out to grab Hannibal's hand. It could have been a fatal error a few weeks ago, but now Hannibal merely tenses and stares down at him. Unafraid, Samuel wraps his arms around Hannibal's middle.

Will just stares, imagining the bruises under the clothes where Samuel is pressing his face and hands as he hugs the taller boy. Will wonders if Samuel knows they're there too. Hannibal is frozen, his eyes nervously darting to Will's, and Will smiles slightly in return. It takes nearly a minute before Hannibal manages to raise his arms and hug the boy back, but he does it. Will is proud of him, insanely proud when Samuel finally lets go.

He doesn't say anything else, but he smiles quickly at Will and then heads back, leaving Hannibal standing there stiffly. Will waits a moment, unsure what to expect. "Come here," he says finally, when it becomes obvious Hannibal isn't going to move on his own. He listens, coming back to sit next to Will and reach for him.

The last thing he expects is the quiet sob he hears when Hannibal presses his face into his shoulder. Emotions surface quickly then, Will can feel them, but Hannibal's careful control only lets that one sob slip out before he reverts back to silence. He imagines the sadness builds from knowing that his parents will never return to take him from this place.

It's all Will needs to hear.

-

Hannibal is distant the rest of the day, and the next one. Samuel's parents do come, and he says goodbye to the other boys over lunch. Hannibal doesn't look at him when he waves slightly at Will, and the younger boy knows not to say goodbye to Hannibal again, especially so publicly. He leaves with one last glance at them. Hannibal doesn't eat any more after that.

They don't even sit by the pond, instead they go to the library and read there. Will finds one of the few books in English that he might enjoy and reads silently by Hannibal while he reads a thick book in Lithuanian.

They jog after, and Hannibal runs at Will's pace even though he's nearly certain Hannibal could run much faster. He always keeps pace with Will, though today he doesn't feel Hannibal running beside him.

Will lets him mentally have his space, simply following him around and sitting quietly while they eat dinner and wash up. He hardly spares Will a glance before he goes to his own cot and changes, laying down before anyone else. Will shuts his eyes and tells himself Hannibal will come back around, he just needs time.

He wakes up while it's still dark; disoriented and unsettled. At first he thinks he had a nightmare, but his clothes are still relatively dry. A cry in the silence makes his eyes wide and he sits up and looks towards Hannibal. He's tangled in the bedding, twisted and trapped. His face is scrunched up and pained, and Will's heart pounds when he cries out again.

"Mischa, no."

His eyes dart towards the door and then back to his distressed friend, and he hesitates only a second before silently climbing from his own cot and slipping into Hannibal's. He's soaked with sweat, and Will wraps one arm tightly around the thrashing body and wraps the other around Hannibal's mouth to muffle his cries. "Sh, you've been doing so good. They'll hear you and take you. It's okay it's only a dream."

He fights Will harder, whimpering desperately against the hand over his mouth. He puts his mouth directly to his ear and hushes him gently, squeezing tighter when he realizes that Hannibal is whimpering his name in his sleep.

"Will," he whines against his palm, struggling frantically.

"I'm here it's okay," he breathes, and suddenly Hannibal's body jerks and tenses and Will knows he's awake. He waits until he gets his bearings before he removes his mouth and eases up his hold.

Hannibal spins on the bed and turns to face him, his eyes are lifeless. Hannibal stares directly into his eyes, searching much like he had the first day. He looks much like the first day Will met him, only now he knows that Will would never hurt him.

Lecter exhales shakily and presses a kiss to Will's mouth and nuzzles in closer, accepting the embrace. Will strokes the back of his neck and rests his cheek against his damp hair until he feels his body relax and Will knows he's asleep again.

He decides to hold him until the darkness outside lightens slightly, watching his softened facial features, before slipping out of the cot. Hannibal doesn't stir, and Will looks down at his slackened boyish features; wishing he could lay there with him longer.

He's hardly in his own cot for an hour before they're woken up and the day starts again.

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Hannibal holds his hand by the pond later that day, tossing bread to the hungry birds that have watched the development of their newfound relationship. Will wonders if Hannibal has a name for them in his head.

"We should run away from here," he says without thought.

Hannibal's hand tightens in his own and he glances over at him, "We could leave one night, find a place to stay. Maybe somehow get back to the states. I have family there we can maybe stay with."

Hannibal bites his lips and watches the birds, considering the words carefully. "Not now, but before winter," he amends, the idea sounding more and more appealing the more he considers it. Hannibal doesn't answer, but Will knows Hannibal would leave with him if Will planned it out.

The thought made the future seem a bit brighter.

Chapter End Notes

Give your opinion on how you'd like to see this end. I have some ideas but I'm torn.

Chapter Summary

Any Lithuanian in this chapter will be translated to English at the end. This was going to be the last chapter, and technically it is but I decided to add a 10th chapter that will be the epilogue. Thank you for reading and reviewing, let me know what you think!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hannibal's nightmares haunt him desperately in the following days, and Will tries his best to ease the suffering. He really does. He even tries anticipating them, cuddling close to Hannibal in his cot as soon as he's sure everyone is asleep. Hannibal melts back against him as soon as he presses up behind him, encasing him in his arms, the peace never lasts. He fights harder and harder in his sleep nearly every night, nearly throwing Will from the bed on some occasions.

His cries always start weak, muffled little whimpers from deep in his chest. Will presses his hand over his mouth and clutches him tighter in anticipation of a fight. He puts a pillow over the boy's head when his whimpers turn to screams of agony, and of course it makes him fight harder. It scares him, terrifies him being held down. Will crushes him with all of his weight, begging him to calm down. Hannibal typically wakes disorientated and petrified, shying away from any attempt Will makes to comfort him. He can hardly bare being touched after, and Will knows the events wake the boys around them. He can hear them startle awake and than turn to lay facing away from them when Will wrestles the thrashing body still.

Hannibal begs not to be touched in his sleep, his words tumbling out of his mouth through clenched teeth. He whines and pleads for the demons in his nightmares not to touch him, not to make him stay still anymore because it hurts. Will can only imagine the visions flashing behind his twitching eyelids. The night terrors are so bad that some nights Hannibal doesn't sleep at all, and Will barely sleeps any nights. They're too tired to keep their eyes open on some days, and they doze by the pond. Hannibal has trouble looking at him, guilty and shamed that he's dragged Will into this mess that is all around and inside himself.

Lecter is tensed and coiled, Will feels he's a rubber band that's been stretched too far. The slightest noise and he's on edge, he even jumps when Will touches him unexpectedly. They were passed that, they're going backwards. Exhaustion and constant worry has Hannibal unstable, his body can't keep up with his mind. It makes Will sick, he can feel his friend's inner pain as if its his own.

That's when he decides something has to be done before Hannibal just...fades away. So far away no one can find him, not even Will.

It's over lunch that he starts formulating, his eyes staring at Hannibal's untouched plate. He tries to imagine what work best, a way for Hannibal to be comfortable. He imagines that he'd get better with freedom, the image of Lecter's shy smile growing in confidence in a life free of abuse. He imagines Hannibal eating until he's full, sleeping wrapped up in Will, sleeping all night... It's minutes into the planning when Charles grabs Hannibal's arm before anyone can react. "The dean wants you," and Hannibal cracks. Will's stomach twists when he realizes he's too late.

He jerks away, his body melting back against Will as he stares at Charles. Charles growls at him angrily, and Hannibal flinches closer to Will's side. "I don't have time for you, he wants to see you and you will go. Get up," and he grabs Hannibal's already bruised arm and pulls him up.

My heart pounds so hard I can feel it in every part of my body. And I can't anymore, I can't.

He recoils and whines, twisting when he reaches for him again. The other watchers step in, grabbing him as he retreats back and tries to run. Will is on his feet then when Hannibal crashes to the ground and kicks at them.

He's unsuccessful, and they have their batons out and the first one hits him in the cheek. And he stops fighting, Will nearly throws up when he just covers his face and let's them hit him. Revenge for all the trouble he ever caused.

Will can't find his voice, he can't move; and there's nothing he can do but watch until the door flies open and an older man storms in. Everyone stands instantly at attention. They back off Hannibal instantly, standing straight when the man stomps up to them. Confused, Will stands stock still, mouth hanging open.

"Come with me," the older man hisses at the three watchers, then glances at Hannibal's crumpled form, then at Will. They make eye contact and Will knows the man before him is the dean. He can feel it.

Anger bubbles in his chest and he stares defiantly back before stepping forward and clutching Hannibal's shirt sleeve. Hannibal cowers away from him, his fingers smearing in the blood on his chin; eyes blown wide. "Come on and try to walk," he says as calmly as he can, Hannibal stutters like he's trying to talk and Will hushes him gently and helps him stand. He doesn't look back as he half drags, half leads him towards the pond. Will tries to identify the noises Hannibal makes, make some sense of them; all he can make of them is that they are a panicked frenzy. Lecter's hands flutter to clutch at Will weakly as he leads him, his body shaking as if his panic has him confused and unsure what to do.

Hannibal is numb, his body tingles and he doesn't feel real. His hands shake as he stares at them, following where the hand on his back leads him. Blood is on his tongue and he realizes his lip is bleeding and he impulsively bites it to force more blood out. His fingers touch it briefly and travel up to smudge it on his swollen cheek. Pain blossoms in his face and he makes a noise and presses his fingers into it. Energy flutters in his finger tips and he pushes harder, the pain spreading to his jaw.

Horried, Will clasps his hands and eases them down to his sides. He has to be gentle and soothing, he has to try. Hannibal stares at him numbly, disoriented; Will suspects he's in shock. "It's going to be okay," he whispers, but he isn't sure he's telling the truth. Will reaches his fingers to turn his face and Hannibal jerks back, licking at his lip as he shrinks to the ground at the edge of the water and hugs his knees to his chest. His tongue laps insistently at the blood from his split lip, his fingers traveling back up to his abused face before fluttering down to press at his battered ribs.

"Hannibal," his voice cracks as he tries again to reach his friend's mind, and he's shaking too. Shaking from exhaustion and constant fighting to keep himself and his friend afloat. "We need to leave okay? I know this is your old home and it's hard to leave, but I'll be with you. This won't happen anymore."

Hannibal sucks at his bleeding lip and raises his fingers to press against his swollen cheek again. He feels trapped in the constant impulse to feel the pain shock his nerves; Will's voice sounds muffled and far away; he can't focus. Impatient, Will grasps his hands tightly and forces them down, kneeling in front of Hannibal. "Look at me Hannibal, this has to stop. And you can't keep hurting the bruises worse, stop touching them." The hands twitch in Will's grasp, and Hannibal sucks harder on his lip, eyes on the swans.

"Stop it, look. At. Me." Will shakes him, and Hannibal looks at him as if he just realized his presence. "I know you're afraid, I am too. I know why you couldn't go with him, and I get it but for it to stop we have to leave."

Hannibal stares at Will, watches blood pour from his skin. Cut skin, skin that he cut. His hands clench and he shuts his eyes tight. Blood drips behind his eye lids, he can taste it in his mouth. His stomach tightens unexpectedly when he swallows the thick blood in his throat. He doesn't want to make Will bleed. Charles' blood runs through his fingers, a chunk of the dean's flesh clenched between his teeth.

He's breathing harshly, and Will shakes him again. "Hannibal, open your eyes."

Blood is warm, even though I'm sure their hearts are cold. Cold hearts that freeze my soul, clutch at me until I'm as cold as they are. I feel fingers tighten around my throat and in my hair, I feel them buried inside me as I open my mouth to groan silently. Cold, thick blood.

He cries out suddenly and Will jumps, releasing one of Hannibal's hands to free up one of his own. He presses his fingers into the abused flesh of his face in a desperate attempt to drag his friend back to reality and ground him, flinching when Hannibal reaches his hand up to clutch Will's wrist.

Pain flares in his face and he imagines his skin being ripped open. *Blood is messy, it covers everything.*

"Hannibal," Will whispers when Lecter starts gasping for air, his hands clutching at his own chest.

I swallow so much blood, my chest is too tight and I can't breathe, the air is on fire. It scalds my skin.

Hannibal screams and shoves at Will, pushing him away desperately when he curls into the dirt. "You're imagining it Hannibal, you have to breathe." So much blood and dead swans and his dead family and dead Will and fingers pressing inside of him until his hips jerk and he's desperate to be touched, touched by anyone. He opens his mouth and he can taste dirt on his lips and he wonders if he was buried alive.

More words die in Will's throat, and he wraps himself around Hannibal's overheated body. Sobs wrack Will's slender frame, the dam he'd hidden behind finally breaking as he cries into Hannibal's back.

Someone is holding me tightly, despite the blood, someone is touching me. Despite being filthy and bloody and pathetic someone is pressing their hands against my ribs. Air finally breaks back into my lungs and I smell Will all around me, consuming me, and the blood finally cools. My urge to spill more quiets and I can hear my own thoughts, the noise inside me recedes.

Lecter squirms to roll over, watching as Will's beautiful face breaks and hot tears stream down his face. Hannibal reaches his fingers to touch them curiously, Will is breathtaking when he cries like this; Hannibal never had the pleasure of seeing it with his own eyes.

He inhales the smell of his angst deeply, licking at the dried blood on his lip; Will squeezes him tighter. "It hurts me, when you're hurt." It's a quiet confession, and Hannibal opens his eyes to study him closely.

Sadness is profound, it speaks to each person differently. Will cries while I... Feel violence perched deep in my chest that expands inside me at any emotion. Will's tears are beautiful. Part of me wishes to speak just so I can voice my thoughts about Will, to tell him that his tears are beautiful and that to turn them red would be... Exquisite.

Instead he kisses Will's cheek, he learned how to demonstrate affection and love in the few fiction books he'd read. The ones that his mother used to read. Will responds to it with a small smile, sniffing in tears. "Are you with me again?"

Hannibal's eyes travel to the swans, regretting he didn't have bread to feed them. Will sits close, reaching out to touch his shoulder.

"You and your boyfriend need to come," Will jumps at the voice and Hannibal is uncomfortably...calm. As if he was expecting Charles to come for them all along. Will tenses, but Hannibal merely stands and walks willingly with Charles. Will keeps up, his knees shaking with anxiety.

Hannibal stands directly at his side, Will can feel he's ready for a fight. He doesn't doubt that half of his calmness is just for Will; he doesn't doubt that he'd fight off anyone laid a finger on Will. The calm will ensure he is ready to protect him if needed.

The dean's office is spacious and furnished like any other office, but with a woman's touch. It's warm and inviting; Will imagines Hannibal's mother decorated it.

"I found them, kissing by the pond beyond the trees," disgust roles from Charles' words and Will flushes hotly, Hannibal's eyes merely harden. The dean looks up from his book and smiles directly at Hannibal.

"I'm glad you've made a friend, that's progress."

"He can not keep acting the way he does, he's a danger to everyone. He should be sent away, with his boyfriend." Charles fixes a hard stare at Hannibal after concluding his argument, and Will senses something else in that stare; something buried and hidden away that feed this older boy's hate and rage. Unfazed, Hannibal turns his attention back to the dean as if curious to hear his argument.

"We will not send anyone away, but Hannibal must stop being disobedient and Charles, you must stop hurting him as you do. If I send for him, you are to bring him without incident."

Charles sneers, snorting in disgust, "He should be put out of his misery."

The dean is on his feet now, and Will swallows the rising anger and fear in his chest. Hannibal is stone still beside him, calculating and waiting.

"He is just a boy, you will treat him as you treat the others."

Angry tears roll down Charles' face, and Will flinches at the rush of emotion, "God forbid anything happens to your toy, tėvas!"

Will's mouth drops open, and Hannibal huffs as the silence falls over the room. Father, the dean is Charles' father. Suddenly the pieces click together and Will understands; pain constricts his chest for the older boy who tormented his only friend in the world.

When the dean finally breaks the silence, it's a deathly quiet whisper; "Show them out, then come back. You and I must speak privately."

Charles turns and glares at them, following just behind them until the door closes. He grabs Hannibal and shoves him against the nearest wall and closes in on his face. Will stands back, coiled and ready to yank Hannibal away should he attack or be attacked, yet Hannibal merely studies Charles calmly.

He glances over his shoulder at Will for a split second before bringing his mouth directly to Hannibal swollen ear. "Jūs sunaikinti savo šeimą, prieš tave mano tėvas buvo ne pabaisa," Charles' voice breaks, his eyes boring into Hannibal's passive ones. "Aš žinau, ką jis daro su jumis, bet aš nežinau, kodėl." The language goes beyond what he knows of Lithuanian, and Will knows this is meant for only Hannibal's ears. He settles for just watching Hannibal for any reaction, and he of course finds none. "Esate bjaurus beproti, jūs sugriovė mano gyvenimą. Palikti čia, kol aš rūpintis jums save, supranti?" By the end, his voice is no more than a hiss, so low Will can barely hear him.

Hannibal shoves Charles off, but makes no move to instigate him further. They stare at each other for what seems like an eternity before Hannibal takes a step back, then another. He turns and grasps Will's arm tightly and turns to lead him back down the hall.

Will let's out a sigh of relief.

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Will ponders the exchange between Hannibal and Charles all day while he watches Hannibal hold ice to his swollen face. They sit idly by the pond; Hannibal's tossing bread to their birds, the gears turning in his mind as Will quietly watches. Too weary to break the silence, Will fidgets uncertainly until Hannibal is out of bread, then he turns and lays back slowly until his head falls directly into Will's lap.

Nervously, Will manages a small smile down at Lecter; and he takes over the job of holding the ice to his face. Hannibal's attentive eyes slip closed and Will understands it's a gesture of trust and permission. He takes it gratefully, letting his free hand tangle in the dark hair on Hannibal's head before trailing a finger down between his eyes and over the slope of his nose, coming to rest on his lips. Will forgets that Hannibal is merely a boy, and at rest his features are free of stress; leaving just his young, soft features behind.

His finger gently rubs against the dried cut and Hannibal's thin lips part slightly, his warm breath tickling Will's fingertips. His eyes examine everything carefully, cataloging anything he can make out.

The fingers travel down his chin to land softly at his throat, feeling the muscles flex as he swallows. There's a faint discoloration, Will flattens his hands to fit it into the nearly faded bruise. He doesn't apply any pressure, just merely holds the spot and imagines Hannibal squirming desperately against the restraint. His pulse thuds against his fingertips, and Will can imagine it was beating much harder at the time.

I can still breathe, it doesn't hurt. It's only Will and I'm still outside. My heart jerks in my chest and I have to open my eyes and be sure.

Hannibal's eyes flutter open to stare up at the sky, and Will lets his hand move further down his collarbone to chest. Hannibal reaches up to unbutton his shirt, and Will swallows thickly when heat spreads low in his belly.

Despite the vivid array of unequally healed marks, Will can't resist touching him. He counts his ribs, feeling them expand with every breath; he brushes against his soft nipples and watches in fascination as they harden before his eyes. He can feel Lecter's heart pound behind the bones, and he looks up at his face to find that he's watching him from half-lidded eyes.

Will smirks at him and slides lower, smiling wider when Hannibal's mouth drops further when his hand presses directly into the hardness growing in his pants. It's unclear who makes the first move, but the ice falls to the dirt when they lean together and kiss. It's needy, the way Hannibal invades his mouth and controls every movement. He sits up and straddles Will's lap, desperately pushing their bodies together and sealing their lips. Will sighs, trembling at the newness of this intimacy. They touched each other and kissed multiple times, but never once had Hannibal brought their whole bodies together.

Nervously, Will's hands slide around his waist under his shirt to flutter up and down his back. Hannibal presses into him, his mouth is even with his chest and Will follows his gut and presses his lips to the warm spot over his heart.

Hannibal makes a noise and clutches at Will's hair when he sucks on his skin. It spurs him further, and his hands come down to clutch at his hips and ass, squeezing. Lecter moans, and Will peeks up at him from his lashes to see the desire play across his face.

One hand on his back, pressing his belly down firmly but rubbing soothingly with the thumb. The other hand gently pressing against his opening, slippery and hot. He jerks at the contact, gritting his teeth when the man coos at him to hush. He's tense when one digit presses forward, relaxing when the initial pain fades and a second finger joins the first. "Easy," the voice purrs in his ear as they move in and out slowly. Warmth pools in his belly and he grips anything his hands can find perch on, gasping when pleasure shoots up the base of his spine. His face is hot, and he imagines the blush creeping over his pale skin when he presses back slightly for more.

Will can feel Hannibal still and knows his mind has traveled away, his bites slightly at his skin and rubs his back; waiting. He's prepared for Hannibal to flee when the reality of the situation sets in, but instead Lecter pushes him back to lay on the dirt.

His eyes shine when he looks down at Will, working to undo the buttons. His desperation is beautiful, and Will just stares at him as he methodically undoes the buttons and licks at his chest, his hands moving right on to the ties of his pants.

Will clears his throat awkwardly, blushing when Hannibal presses a kiss to his belly button. It's disturbing to wonder where exactly he learned any of this from, where he learned to wrap his mouth around his aching erection. Will flushes hotter with the thought of returning the act, embarrassed that he wouldn't be able to make Hannibal feel this good.

The sensation is like no other, and he squirms restlessly under Hannibal. He stops all too soon and crawls back up to crush their lips together again, and Will's embarrassment floats away into desire and he shoves at Hannibal's pants and wraps his hand around his cock and moans to match Lecter's sounds.

Hannibal noses at his ear and inhales deeply in his hair, his gasping breath hot in his ear. Curiously, Will's fingers explore lower, rolling his sack in his hand; taking cues from the way Hannibal breathes faster. Sweat coats them and Will needs more, and his fingers press just below. Hannibal's body jerks and he cries out; warm, wetness coating both of their stomachs.

Ever sure of himself, Hannibal returns the favor before Will can even register he moved, and he cums all over their hands, biting harshly into Hannibal's shoulder.

They lay there, Hannibal pinning Will beneath him, and catch their breaths. It's surreal, peaceful; Will feels the need to crawl into Hannibal's skin and live there with him, to share the space with him and become one being. He never wants to be separate. "I think I love you, I don't know what would have happened to me if I didn't meet you," Will mumbles into his neck, clutching Hannibal to him. The body above him stiffens and Hannibal leans back to look down at him.

It's the first real eye contact they ever shared, and Will can't bring himself to look away from the searching gaze. There's sadness lingering in the depths of his eyes, but they're warmed with emotion and Will touches his unbruised cheek and smiles slightly, "Please don't be sad."

Hannibal rolls off of him and Will shivers at the exposure and follows Hannibal's lead to rinsing their hands and bellies off in the pond. Will admires their reflections side by side in the ripples of the water and laughs. Hannibal pulls his pants back up and eyes him curiously, "I'm sorry, life is just so funny sometimes. How everything works out."

Hannibal's lips twitch into a small smile before he looks away to put his shirt back on. Will can tell he doesn't understand what he means.

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Everyone avoids them like the plague for the rest of the day, even Charles. He watches them like a hawk from afar, but Hannibal doesn't so much as look up at him. He's extra focused on Will, standing close enough to touch him at all the times. Will interprets it as new found affection, and it makes him feel weightless. Hannibal even eats most of his meal, sitting close enough that their sides touch.

That night, Will waits anxiously for everyone to sleep, counting in his head. He never makes it that far, instead his bed shifts as Hannibal comes to curl up behind him. Butterflies flutter in his stomach and he hugs Hannibal to him. "You beat me to it," he whispers.

He drifts off warm and comfortable, dreaming of him and Hannibal back in the states years from now. A chance at life for both of them.

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He wakes up when they're called, dressing quickly. His eyes naturally search for Hannibal, the lightness in his chest fading when he's no where to be found. He hadn't woken up to the sound of any nightmares, in fact he hadn't woken up at all. He follows all the boys to the yard for their exercise, looking at all their nameless faces.

He debates asking if anyone had seen his friend, a cold, uneasy feeling settling in his chest when Hannibal's seat remains empty through all of breakfast.

He practically sprints to the pond, bursting through the brush expecting to see his friend sitting with the swans. The birds look at him expectingly, waiting for bread. Numbness settles in his bones when he sees a folded piece of paper in the disturbed dirt he'd sat in every day for the past few months. It's just under a rock, the white of it sticking out against the earth.

Will can't swallow as he picks it up and unfolds it, staring dazedly at the elaborate drawing of a cricket.

It was time for me to move on, but not time for you. Good luck, my Will.
Meilè,
Hannibal

Lithuanian to English translation.

Tėvas: father

Jūs sunaikinti savo šeimą: you destroyed my family.

Prieš tave mano tėvas buvo ne pabaisa: before you my father was not a monster.

Aš žinau, ką jis daro su jumis: I know what he does to you.

Bet aš nežinau, kodėl: but I do not know why.

Esate bjaurus beproti: you are a disgusting freak.

Jūs sugriovė mano gyvenimą: you ruined my life.

Palikti čia, kol aš rūpintis jums save, supranti?: leave here before I take care of you myself, understand?

Meilė: love

Just the epilogue is left so we know what became of Will.

沈默

Chapter Notes

This is the epilogue, and the end of this part. I've been entertaining the idea of a sequel, consisting of maybe a one shot where they meet again years later, which would be the beginning of the show.

I also got a request to rewrite this all from Hannibal's point of view, and a request for a sequel for where Hannibal gets some revenge. Leave comments with your opinions, I enjoy this verse!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Will's father comes for him without his mother or dog, he half wishes he hadn't come at all. He's left alone, no one speaks to him or bothers him; content to just read by the pond and ensure the swans get their snacks.

It's nearly a month and a half later when Charles approaches him and speaks clearly and unthreatening "The dean wishes to see you," the words send a shiver directly down his spine, the sentence bringing forth thoughts he'd struggled to push away.

The walk seems so much longer than it previously was, and he wonders numbly if he's Hannibal's replacement; a surrogate needed after so long without Hannibal. The last thing he expects to see is his father standing there, chatting with the dean. The dean introduces his father to his son Charles, who smiles politely and shakes his hand.

Apparently they've known each other for many years, the thought makes Will cringe.

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He listens idly and numbly while his father explains that his mother fell ill not long after they were separated. She didn't make it to the end of winter, and they lost track of his dog too. He followed them silently until one day he was just...gone.

Will doesn't believe the story about his dog, but his father isn't the type of man to make up a story to spare someone's feelings.

He's arranged for them to return to the states, permanently. Will wants to scream that if he hadn't dragged them there to begin with none of this would have happened.

He wouldn't be clutching an extremely creased piece of paper in his pocket and wishing it was some strange boy's hand instead. His mother and his dog would still be alive, and Hannibal would be just one of the boy's his teachers described as being beaten and orphaned overseas.

Those lessons would have broken his heart, he would have lost sleep over them for at least a week; but at least there wouldn't be a face to put to the stories of war.

He hadn't read the note again since that day he found it, instead keeping it folded under his pillow at night and in his pocket during the day.

He considers showing his father the paper numerous times over the following months, he carries it with him always. His father never asks what happened between them seeing each other, and every time Will considers telling him about Hannibal he finds the words dead in his throat and the paper clutched in his hand.

He fears speaking of the memories that haven't faded at all will taint them, that his father's opinion would spoil the warmth that pools in his belly when he dreams of Hannibal's hands down his pants and his lips pressing against his.

He knows it would shame his father, his son running off and kissing some strange, troubled, boy while feeding the birds. It would infuriate him further if Will let the tears that he was sure would fall if he spoke of the events out loud in front of him. Sometimes he's surprised his father even came for him, but then again he was surprised Hannibal left without him. He tried to be angry at him for it, but he could feel the stifled panicked need to flee so strong in Hannibal that he couldn't blame the boy for going, even if it was alone. Alone made sense, Hannibal was a creature accustomed to solitude until Will forced himself over Hannibal's carefully constructed walls he hid behind.

The boy was too petrified to speak, it was foolish to believe he'd bring Will away with him.

He can feel the pain coiled in his chest when he thinks about Hannibal's desperate cries in his sleep, often he wakes up and looks around the room and expects to find his friend in the throws of a night terror. Instead, the cries he hears in his sleep are his own and instead of crawling out of his bed and into Hannibal's, he hugs his pillow to him and buries his face in it.

He's sure his father hears him cry at night, but instead of asking; he presents Will with a dog. A puppy. Will's heart swells with love for it instantly, finally feeling the crushing loneliness lighten when the puppy licks his face.

He calls her Annabelle, and thinks of Mischa's little voice forgetting the H. He hugs the dog every night instead of his pillow after that.

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I can't tell the amount of time it takes me to find Lady Murasaki, but when I find myself outside her estate, my body is shaking from weakness and anxiety I haven't felt in so long. I can't alert her of my presence, instead I crumple against the wall of the building, clutching my hair and tugging to feel the slight sting on my scalp. My fingers wander down to my cheek, pressing where pressure used to cause a flair of pain before the wounds healed over the time of my travels.

I whine at the lack pain, frustrated with the dull ache that's settled in my chest so deeply I want to reach down my throat and rip it out from where it clenches my heart. I reach in my pocket for the papers and pictures and clutch them to my chest, digging my fingers where the faded bruises used to taint my skin. The pain is so faint, and certainly not enough; I huff and pull at my hair roughly. Soft hands gently cover mine on the side of my head, holding firmly. The desperate throbbing behind my eyes eases slightly at the contact and I fight the urge to flinch away or lean into it; instead I remain stone still. I can smell the warm scent of my aunt's perfume, yet I can't help but wish that when I force my eyes open to see, it will be Will over me. The hands take the pictures from my lap and I stare at them, watching them gather them and slip them into a robe pocket.

I peek out from under my lids, and Lady Murasaki is kneeling delicately in front of me, as beautiful as ever. Her gentle eyes search my face worriedly, her fingers rubbing my temples soothingly.

"Hello, Hannibal," she whispers comfortingly, her hand shifting under my arm slowly to help me stand.

I swallow roughly, staring at the ground as she leads me inside and wraps a blanket around my shoulders, I hadn't even realized I was shaking from the cold. She gives me space, as if she suspects I will disappear if she moves too fast. I don't think she's wrong.

A warm mug is pressed into my hands and I hadn't realized my mind had wandered; I jump and clutch the warmth and inhale the scent of tea. It's calming, and I sip it, wishing it was cool enough to drink greedily.

Lady Murasaki sits across from me with her own mug, watching me with a soft expression that I can't look at. Shame flutters in my belly as if she can visibly see all the terrible things that hide inside me and that I hid under clothing. As if she can visibly see me thrusting up against hands as they touch me, my eyes closed while I imagine it's a strange boy from the states that consumed my every thought.

I inhale sharply when she leans forward and touches my wrist, bringing me back to the present. My eyes flutter up to look at her and she smiles softly, "I'm glad you came here Hannibal."

My heart flutters and I smile shyly at her in return, glancing around the room to take in the house. It reminds me of my mother. "What happened to you, Hannibal?"

I close my eyes and swallow the memories of blood and pain and fingers and my family and nightmares and Will. She's too beautiful and pure to be tainted with such obscenities. I want to pretend she doesn't know, but in my limited experience of women, I've come to see that they know more when you don't tell them. Loving in a way that a man could never be.

She's kind and careful and patient, understanding that I won't answer her. She moves on, standing to take the half empty mug from me and stand me up. She leads me directly to a room, ignoring the persistent shaking that vibrates my body. She lays out some of my uncle's sleepwear; I stare at it blankly and she gently touches my hair. "How long have you not been

speaking for?" She wonders out loud, massaging my scalp gently. It must be apparent that I'm not at a loss for words, more like I just don't use them at all.

She smiles sadly and I can't look at sadness on her, she's too breathtaking for it. "If you won't speak or act on your own, I will instruct you. But only if you work to get better, with time of course. Can you do that?" I pick up the shirt from the bed and remove the ruined one, just to prove I haven't lost my ability to act. Her eyes rake over my chest and I know she's examining whatever marks remain. Though they're long faded, I wonder if she can see the healed ones. The marks under my skin.

She pulls back the covers to busy herself looking away while I change my pants, not knowing that I've lost the shame of nudity long ago. "Rest now, we will come up with plans tomorrow." I do what she says, and she hovers near the bed as if she wishes to press a kiss to my face, I can feel her will to. She thinks better of it and leaves without another word.

I dream of Will, running to follow me and dying in the cold. I wake up cold and hot at the same time, Lady Murasaki sits over me and strokes my wet hair. Tears glisten in her eyes, "Who is Will, Hannibal? Why do you cry for him?" I flinch when she says his name and she lowers her hand from my face to my hand. "Sleep again, I will sit with you." I close my eyes and know she isn't lying.

I dream that the warm hand holding my cold one belongs to Will.

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I haven't seen her in years, yet she knows me, understands me. She understands that I cry in my sleep, she understands when the food her cook prepares comes back up. She understands when I flinch away from her when she reaches to push the hair from my face, even understands when I scratch at my skin until it bleeds without even realizing it. She doesn't even comment when she helps me out of bed and strips the urine soaked bedding from the top while I stand there in a daze.

She's gentle with me, carefully taking my arms and cleaning the wounds and sitting with me when I scream myself awake in the middle of the night.

She never gets angry, deciding to teach me how to paint and play piano. I hear her pray for me at night, asking for strength to care for me. I wonder if she would have liked Will if I brought him along, if she'd be bothered by her nephew sharing a bed with another boy.

She doesn't let me stagnate for long, forcing me to study and learn and grow, even if its in silence. She doesn't tolerate impoliteness, requiring me to still interact with her without forcing me to speak.

Until one day a word slips past my lips while she teaches me how to arrange flowers. It's quiet and hoarse, and I feel my face darken at the sound of the raspy whisper. "You're a good boy, Hannibal," she says gently, smiling at me kindly; her eyes are warm with adoration.

Those emotions will never make sense to me, how could anyone love a monster?

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading along, I can't believe I actually finished!

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